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MARTIN CHANNEL
SAIGON 8727 IMMEDIATE
DELIVER IMMEDIATELY
APRIL 22, 1975
TO: HENRY A. KISSINGER
FROM: AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN

1. I SAW NEW PRESIDENT HUONG FOR ABOUT ONE HOUR LATE THIS AFTERNOON. A DETAILED MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WILL BE PREPARED AND FORWARDED IN DUE COURSE, BUT THE ESSENTIAL IMPRESSIONS GAINED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

FIRST, WHATEVER OTHERS MAY HAVE THOUGH HUONG DOES NOT THINK OF HIMSELF AS AN INTERIM PRESIDENT. HE REALIZES VIET-NAM IS IN ENORMOUS PERIL. HE IS PREPARED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS WHICH FEW OTHER VIETNAMESE POLITICIANS WOULD FEEL ABLE TO DO IN ORDER TO PRESERVE SAIGON FROM "A BATH OF BLOOD" AND HOPEFULLY TO MAINTAIN FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE AN INDEPENDENT SOUTH VIET-NAM WHOSE FOREIGN POLICIES HE UNDERSTANDS WILL HAVE TO BE RADICALLY ALTERED IN DUE COURSE.

SECOND, HE RECEIVED PRIME MINISTER CAN THIS MORNING WHO TENDERED THE RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE TOLD HIM TO STAY IN PLACE FOR A WEEK WHILE HE CONSIDERED WHAT PERSONALITIES MIGHT BEST SERVE VIET-NAM IN THE CHANGING SITUATION. HE IS VERY CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT PARTICULAR NAMES IN THE VIETNAMESE POLITICAL GALAXY MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE TO HANOI. HE HOPES TO HAVE SOME METHOD OF COMMUNICATING WITH HANOI, BUT KNOWS OF NONE EXCEPT THROUGH THE FOUR PARTY MECHANISM AT LA CELLE ST. CLOUD. AMBASSADOR PHONG WHO WAS ORDERED TO COME BACK ON MONDAY SENT WORD HE COULD NOT ARRIVE UNTIL WEDNESDAY AND LATER WORD THAT HE COULD NOT ARRIVE BEFORE FRIDAY. I SUGGESTED THAT THE FOUR PARTY-TWO PARTY SYSTEM EXISTING IN SAIGON INCLUDING THE LIAISON FLIGHTS TO HANOI, MIGHT PROVE A USEFUL AND UNOBTRUSIVE CHANNEL. HE IS CONSIDERING THIS.

THIRD, HE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH FOR WASHINGTON TO BE THE INTERLOCUTOR WITH HANOI IN WORKING OUT THE MODALITIES OF SOME NEW ARRANGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT WHICH HANOI WILL ACCEPT AND WITH

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HAK, SCOWCROFT, MCFARLANE, RODMAN

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WHICH SOUTH VIET-NAM MIGHT LIVE. I SAID I WOULD CONVEY HIS REQUEST, BUT THAT I THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE LITTLE DISPOSITION IN WASHINGTON TO AGAIN UNDERTAKE SUCH A DOMESTICALLY POLITICALLY DANGEROUS EXERCISE AND THAT IN ANY EVENT, GIVEN THE ARRAY OF ENEMY FORCES NOW MARSHALLED IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, TIME WAS OF THE ESSENCE. HE SAID HE WAS SEEING THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOMORROW MORNING AND WOULD ASK HIM TO CONVEY HIS FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE TO HANOI, STATING THAT HE HAD TO HAVE TIME TO FORM A CABINET THAT WOULD BE REASONABLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIET-NAM AND ALSO ACCEPTABLE TO HANOI. I WILL TRY TO FIND OUT TOMORROW MORNING WHAT HE ACTUALLY SAYS TO THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR.

FOURTH, HE IS STILL COUNTING ON THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT MILITARY AID NOW TO PRESERVE INTACT THE MORALE AND CAPABILETY OF THE ARVN WITHOUT WHICH ANY NEGOTIATION WOULD BE HOPELESS AND CAPITULATION INEVITABLE. HE ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS GRATITUDE TO PRESIDENT FORD FOR THE CLARITY AND PRECISION OF PRESIDENT FORD'S SUPPORT AND HIS STEADFASTNESS IN DEFENDING PAST COMMENTMENTS ON WHICH VIET-NAM HAD DEPENDED. HE HOPED THAT THE NAKEDNESS OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACK MIGHT SUFFICIENTLY CHANGE ATTITUDES IN CONGRESS TO PERMIT THE CAMPAIGN BEING WAGED BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

2. MY IMPRESSION FROM THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IS THAT THE FRENCH HAVE ADVISED HANOI TO NOT PRESS AN IMMEDIATE MILITARY ATTACK AT THE MOMENT AND TO GIVE A LITTLE TIME TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE RESUMPTION OF THE POLITICAL AND NEGOTIATING TRACK MIGHT NOT PRODUCE RESULTS MUCH MORE FAVORABLE TO HANOI IN TERMS OF WORLD PUBLIC OPINION. I GATHER IT IS THE FRENCH OPINION THAT THEIR ADVICE HAS BEEN HEARD AND THE CURRENT LULL IN THE FIGHTING WOULD SEEM TO BEAR THIS OUT.

3. REGARDLESS OF BITS AND PIECES OF INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION ABOUT MOVEMENTS IT WOULD SEEM TO BE POSSIBLE THAT WHILE HANOI MAY BE MOVING FORCES INTO POSITION THEY WILL PROBABLY GIVE A LITTLE BIT MORE TIME TO SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN. I HOPE, THEREFORE, YOU CAN CONTINUE TO KEEP THE PANIC BUTTON LOCKED UP AND THAT WE WILL NOT OURSELVES PRECIPITATE A FINAL TRAGEDY HERE BY ORDERING ACTIONS WHICH ARE NOT YET JUSTIFIED. THERE IS, AFTER ALL, A TELEPHONE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND SAIGON AND IF A DECISION APPEARS URGENT ON THE BASIS OF SO CALLED EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO THE WSAG ITS IMPLICATIONS MIGHT BE CHECKED OUT WITH ME BEFORE ANY INSTRUCTIONS ARE ISSUED.

4. BY MIDNIGHT TONIGHT, WE EXPECT TO BE DOWN UNDER 1,500 FOR THE TOTAL OF AMERICAN CITIZENS REMAINING AND PROBABLY DOWN TO 1,000 BY MIDNIGHT TOMORROW. THIS WAS A TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE GOAL TO BE MET BUT A DEDICATED STAFF HAS ACHIEVED IT. BY THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, WE WILL HAVE REDUCED THE ESSENTIAL NUMBER, INCLUDING THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND OTHERS, WHICH I WOULD EXPECT TO TAKE OUT IN A

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ONE LAST CYCLE. I HAVE JUST TALKED TODAY TO GEN. CAREY, THE GROUND FORCE COMMANDER, AND I THINK EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER HERE. THEREFORE, I HOPE TO GOD YOU GET YOUR COLLEAGUES ON THE WSAG TO RELAX A BIT.

B. WARMEST REGARDS,
MARTIN

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